REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 10, 13 and 23 are amended and new dependent claim 25 is added. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicant's representatives during the July 28 personal interview. The substance of that interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Sakaguchi (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,636 B1). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

In particular, Applicant asserts that Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest a method for transmitting workflow-enabled electronic mail messages from a user of a workflow system to a recipient including at least embedding a link to a determined network address in an email message to the recipient, associating a process of the workflow system with the determined network address, and sending the email message having the link to the determined network address to the recipient, as recited in independent claim 1.

Further, Applicant asserts that Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest a method for transmitting workflow-enabled electronic mail messages from a user of a workflow system to a recipient including at least incorporating a determined email response address into an email message to the recipient, associating a process of the workflow system with the determined email response address, and sending the email message having the incorporated email response address to the recipient, as recited in independent claim 10.

Additionally, Applicant asserts that Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest a method for accessing a workflow process using a workflow-enabled email message including at least receiving the workflow-enabled email message that includes a link to a network address

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associated with a workflow process, wherein the network address is specific to the workflow process and to the email message, selecting the link to access the network address, wherein, in response, the workflow system provides access to the workflow process, as recited in independent claim 21.

Additionally, Applicant asserts that Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest a method for providing access to a workflow process in response to receiving a network address that is associated with the workflow process including at least determining if a user from which a network address is received is a valid user of that network address, and providing access to the user to the workflow process only if the user from which the network address is received is determined to be a valid user of that network address, as recited in independent claim 23.

Specifically, Sakaguchi discloses a workflow management method for a system in which works are performed via a network interconnecting user interface and a combination of a mail system and a workflow management system. When a mail message is to be sent to another user, via the use of a mail transmission/reception acceptance part 103, the contents of the message are analyzed by the mail delivery part 105. See, column 4, lines 3-10. Afterwards, the mail message is stored within the mail box 108 of the user specified by the mail or the address of the mail in the mail box. After the mail is delivered by the mail delivery part 105, an audit data recording part 107 stores assignment audit data in the mail transmission audit data storage unit 110. See, column 4, lines 10-18. Finally, the audit data is used by the mail flow extraction part 118 to create the extracted mail flow pattern, as shown in FIG. 13, and a mail flow chart 1304 is displayed to the user. See, column 7, lines 4-20.

Accordingly, in contrast to Applicant's claimed invention, Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest a method for transmitting workflow-enabled electronic mail messages from a user of a workflow system to a recipient by embedding a link to a determined network address in

an email message to the recipient, as recited in independent claim 1. Instead, the reference is directed toward creating a method to manage a centralized workflow system based upon an electronic mail system by extracting workflow information from email data that is stored within the archived central location.

Further, Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest a method for accessing a workflow process using a workflow-enabled email message by receiving a workflow-enabled email message that includes a link to a network address associated with a workflow process, wherein the network address is specific to the workflow process and to the email message, and by selecting the link, the workflow system provides the user access to the workflow process, as recited in independent claim 21. Instead, the reference is directed toward creating a method to manage a centralized workflow system based upon an electronic mail system by extracting workflow information from email data that is stored within the archived central location. Additionally, the reference assumes that all parties that have received or sent an email message are valid users of the workflow system, and therefore there is no disclosure or teaching of accessing the workflow system.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 10 and 23 distinguishes over the applied art for similar reasons.
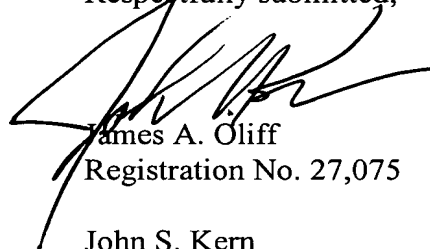
Additionally, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claims 4 and 13 distinguishes over the applied art because Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest a method, wherein generating the network address includes randomly or pseudo-randomly generating the network address, as recited in dependent claim 4, and similarly recited in dependent claim 13. Instead, Sakaguchi discloses that a message ID field 312 is an identifier which the mail system uniquely assigns to each mail. See column 4, lines 63-65. However, Sakaguchi states that the message ID field is unique, but does not teach that the message ID field 312 is selected randomly, pseudo-randomly, or from a predefined listing of message IDs.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 10, 21 and 23 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 2-9, 11-20, 22, 24 and 25 depend from independent claims 1, 10, 21 and 23, and therefore, also define patentable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

John S. Kern
Registration No. 42,719

JAO:RHP/brc

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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